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SUBJECT: PARTIES FOCUS ON MAJORITARIAN RACES IN GEORGIA'S
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

¶1. Summary: On April 28, the Central Election Commission (CEC) approved the lists of candidates for the May 21 parliamentary elections that were submitted by political parties on April 21. Most of the party leaders, except Republicans, are both leading the party lists and running as majoritarian candidates. The top ten party list and majoritarian candidates from each leading party are included in this cable. Both the ruling party and opposition are emphasizing their majoritarian candidates over the party lists. Earlier opposition calls to cooperate in majoritarian districts -- and not run against each other -- appear to have failed, as many parties are running some of their strongest candidates in the same districts. End summary.

¶2. On April 28 the CEC registered party and majoritarian lists of candidates for the May 21 elections. A main feature of the current election campaign is that most of the parties are running their strong candidates, including party leaders, both in the party lists and as majoritarian candidates. This is a significant change from previous elections. Currently, most of the party leaders are running as majoritarian candidates, and on the party lists. Exceptions include Republican David Usupashvili and National Movement candidate David Bakradze, both leading their party lists. Parties are banking on this new strategy to increase their chances of bringing in more candidates from the party lists. If a majoritarian candidate wins the district, the next person on the party list will take his/her place. Thus, strong and well known candidates winning the districts vacate slots in the party lists for other party members.

¶3. Several United National Movement (UNM) candidates held offices in the executive branch. They have resigned, but titles are included for clarity. The UNM's top ten party list candidates, in order, are:

- Davit Bakradze, former Foreign Minister;
- Koba Subeliani, former Minister for Refugees and Accommodation;
- Gia Roinishvili, an actor;
- Zaza Gamtsemlidze, former Minister of Environment;
- Nugzar Tsiklauri, a publisher;
- Khatuna Ochiauri, former member of the Tbilisi City Council (Sakrebulo);
- Davit Darchiashvili, executive director of the Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF);
- Mikheil Machavariani, the vice-speaker of the Parliament;
- Zurab Melikishvili, the general secretary of the ruling party;
- Gigi Tsereteli, MP, head of the parliamentary health committee.

¶4. The Joint Opposition bloc, which includes the United National Council of Opposition (UNC) and the New Rightists party nominated the following top ten party list candidates:

- Levan Gachechiladze, MP, former presidential candidate for, Leader of the UNC;
- David Gamkrelidze, MP, leader of the New Rights;
- Konstantine Gamsakhurdia, Leader of the Freedom party;
- Zviad Dzidziguri, Leader of the Conservative party;

- Koba Davitashvili, Leader of the Peoples' party;
- Eka Beselia, leader of the Movement for the United Georgia (Okruashvili's party);
- Gubaz Sanikidze, former leader of the Traditionalist party;
- Dimitri Lortkipanidze, Georgian Bar Association;
- Giorgi Khiandrava, former state minister for conflict resolution;
- Jondi Baghaturia, leader of the Georgian Dasi party.

15. The Republicans nominated the following top ten party list candidates:

- David Usupashvili, Leader of the party;
- Levan Berdzenishvili, MP, one of the leaders of the party;
- Valeri Gelashvili, businessman, former MP deprived of parliamentary immunity by the majority, the opposition still demands an investigation into his case of being beaten by assailants two years ago;
- Ivliane Khaindrava, MP, one of the leaders of the party;
- David Berdzenishvili, MP, one of the leaders of the party;
- Tina Khidasheli, one of the leaders of the party;
- David Zurabishvili, MP, former head of the Democratic faction;
- Irakli Batiashvili, Former minister of security, detained in relation with Kodori events and later pardoned by the Acting President, Burjanadze. He has filed a claim in the Strasbourg court demanding compensation;
- Leri Khabulovi, sportsman, former member of the Georgian Olympic committee;
- Murman Dumbadze, MP of the Ajara Supreme council, head of the Republican's branch in Ajara.

16. The Labor party nominated the following top ten party list candidates:

TBILISI 00000751 002 OF 003

- Shalva Natelashvili, leader of the party;
- Ioseb Shatberashvili, secretary general of the party;
- Giorgi Gugava, member of the Tbilisi Sakrebulo;
- Ramaz Tevdoradze, MP;
- Nugzar Ergemlidze, artist;
- Kakha Dzagania, ideological secretary of the party;
- Nestan Kirtadze, head of the international division of the party;
- Paata Jibladze, executive secretary of the party;
- Konstantine Gugushvili, administrative secretary of the party;
- Temur Dolashvili, MP.

17. The Christian Democratic Movement (CDM) nominated the following top ten party list candidates, most of whom are journalists:

- Giorgi Targamadze, Leader of the party;
- Levani Vepkhvadze;
- Magda Anikashvili;
- Giorgi Akhvlediani;
- Rati Maisuradze;
- Nikoloz Laliashvili;
- Giorgi Guliashvili;
- Nugzar Sarjveladze;
- Irakli Moseshvili;
- Ioseb Kublashvili.

18. The Christian Democratic Alliance political union unites former presidential candidate Giorgi Maisashvili, former Deputy Speaker of the Parliament Giorgi Kobakhidze, and Temur Shashiashvili, who was a governor of Imereti region during Eduard Shevardnadze's presidency. This party nominated the following top ten party list candidates:

- Giorgi Maisashvili, Leader of "Party of Future", former presidential candidate;
- Giorgi Kobakhidze, former Deputy Speaker of the Parliament;
- David Tarkhan-Mouravi, "Orient Logic" company advisor;
- Cheishvili David, physicist;
- Merab Khursitdze, MP;
- Zviad Bokuchava, manager;
- Giorgi Shervashidze, former Deputy Chief of General Staff;

- Irma Inashvili, journalist;
- Giorgi Gachechiladze, leader of the Greens party;
- Phasil Aliev, currently unemployed.

19. Both the ruling party and opposition parties are emphasizing their majoritarian candidates. It has become clear that the opposition could not agree to coordinate races in many districts, thereby competing with the UNM rather than each other. Most of them have placed their strongest candidates in the same districts. For example, Tbilisi's 10 districts each have no less than 5 candidates vying for them, most of whom are the party's notable figures. Most observers believe this will result in split opposition votes, and the UNM will benefit by needing fewer votes to win seats. However, the ruling party faces some problems as well. After Parliamentary Chairperson Nino Burjanadze's announced on April 21 that she will not run in the election, the ruling party replaced some majoritarian MP candidates who were considered Burjanadze's team members -- and who had already started their campaign. At least five majoritarian MP candidates from Kutaisi, Borjomi, Shuakhevi, Khulo and Keda were replaced.

110. Key match-ups in Tbilisi include, by district:

Vake - Levan Berdzenishvili, a Republican leader, is competing with New Rights leader David Gamkrelidze representing the UNC, and Zaza Gamtsemlidze, former Minister of Environment representing UNM. Other candidates in Vake include Lela Gaprindashvili from the Labor party; Giorgi Gachechiladze, leader of the Greens party and representing Christian Democratic Alliance; and Irma Jangirashvili from the Traditionalists.

Saburtalo - This appears to be one of the most hotly-contested constituencies in Tbilisi. Tina Khidasheli, one of the leaders of the Republic Party, will compete with Giorgi Meladze, the Deputy Mayor of Tbilisi, nominated by the UNM. Other candidates include: Revaz Shavishvili, a former head of the state audit agency nominated by the UNC; lawyer Lia Mukhashavria, Head of the NGO Article 42, nominated by an election bloc uniting the Traditionalists (leader Akaki Asatiani), Our Georgia (leader MP Gocha Jojua), and the Women's Party (leader MP Guguli Magradze); Tamaz Shioshvili, nominated by the Labor Party; journalist Magda Anikashvili, representing the CDM; and Giorgi Maisashvili, former presidential candidate, representing the Christian-Democratic Alliance.

Mtatsminda - Ivliane Khaindrava, a Republican leader, will challenge Giorgi Tortladze, one of the leaders of the UNC. Other candidates include: Levan Ghvinjilia, a well-known public figure who is always fighting for purity of the Georgian language, representing the CDM; Elizbar Javelidze, another well-known figure, representing the Labor party; and Archil Gegenava, businessman, owner of wine company

TBILISI 00000751 003 OF 003

Teliani Valley, representing the UNM.

Samgori - Levan Gachechiladze will compete with businesswoman, and owner of the real estate development company "Center Point," Rusudan Kervalishvili, who represents the UNM, and Labor party representative Kakha Dzaganian.

Isani - Vakhtang Khmaladze, former MP and one of the authors of the Georgian Constitution, representing the Republicans will compete with UNM candidate Giorgi Gogvadze, shareholder of the People's Bank, and Zviad Dzidziguri, leader of the Conservative party, representing the UNC.

Krtsanisi - Giorgi Khaindrava, a former State Minister for Conflict Resolution from the UNC will compete with Dilar Khabuliani, gamgebeli of Didgori District of Tbilisi, representing the UNM.

111. Key match-ups are also taking place in the regions. In Kutaisi, Akaki Bobokhidze, former Kutaisi Governor, will compete for the UNM with the Traditionalists' party representative Gogi Tsulaia, who used to lobby for Badri Patarkatsihvili's interests in Kutaisi. The Joint Opposition nominated Gubaz Sanikidze, one of the former leaders of the Traditionalists and Republicans nominated Viktor Nakashidze, Kutaisi Council member. Nestan Kirtadze will fight for

the Labor Party, and Giorgi Akhvlediani, a former Imedi journalist and originally from Kutaisi, will represent the CDM.

¶12. In Batumi, Republican leader Davit Berdzenishvili is competing against Teimuraz Charkviani, of the UNM, and Niaz Zosidze, a journalist and former gamgebeli of Shuakhevi district of Ajara, representing the CDM. Other party representatives in Batumi are Shota Zoidze, from the Citizens' Political Union "Georgian Politics," Irakli Jashi of the Industrialists, David Robakidze from Labor, and Akaki Tsivadze from the Traditionalists.

¶13. In Zugdidi, Gocha Pipia, leader of the Citizens' Political Union "Georgian Politics" and former ally of Badri Patarkatsishvili, will compete with Ada Marchania, former MP and IDP from Abkhazia representing the Labor party, Koba Davitashvili, Leader of the People's party representing the UNC, Pridon Todua, professor and Head of the Tbilisi Hospital "Todua Center" representing the UNM, and Giorgi Shervashidze, former Deputy Chief of the General Staff.

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